



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Safety Recommendation

Log H-531

Date: June 5, 1989

In reply refer to: H-89-15

Mr. Gerald Mercadante
President
Leisure Time, Inc.
Mahwah, New Jersey 07430

About 11:25 a.m. eastern standard time on November 29, 1988, a chartered intercity bus carrying a driver and 49 passengers en route to Atlantic City, New Jersey, from New York City, New York, was traveling southbound in the right "express" lane of the New Jersey Garden State Parkway near Tinton Falls, New Jersey. The bus, without signaling, gradually veered rightward off the travel lane, sideswiped a guardrail, skidded back onto the highway, overturned onto its right side, and slid about 220 feet diagonally across the two express lanes before coming to rest facing east with the rear of the bus across half of the left travel lane. There was no intrusion into the occupant compartment, no other vehicles were involved in the accident, and there was no fire. The weather was clear and dry at the time of the accident. Forty-nine passengers (ages 60 to 85 years) and the 39-year-old busdriver sustained minor to severe injuries such as fractured ribs, lacerations, abrasions, and contusions.¹

The busdriver stated that during the bus overturn, he was partially ejected through the driver's side of the windshield and, as he was passing through the windshield, he grasped the steering wheel and held on until the bus came to rest. The busdriver admitted to Safety Board investigators that he was not wearing the available lapbelt. New Jersey State law, as well as 49 CFR 392.16, requires safety belt usage when seatbelts are installed at the driver's position.

Had the busdriver been wearing his lapbelt, he probably would not have been partially ejected from the bus. However, wearing a lapbelt may not have altered the outcome of this accident since the loss of control and overturn sequence probably occurred before the busdriver was partially ejected. Nonetheless, seatbelts should be used by drivers at all times while the vehicle is in motion to ensure that the drivers remain in their

¹For more detailed information, read Highway Accident/Incident Reports-- "Intercity-Type Buses Chartered for Service to Atlantic City, New Jersey" (NTSB/HAR-89/01/SUM).

seating positions, and thus be better able to maintain control of the bus in accident situations.

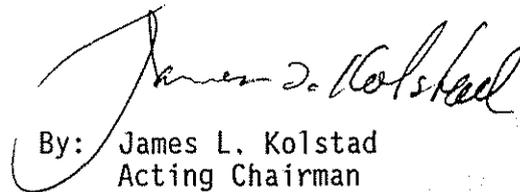
Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that Leisure Time, Inc.:

Require that all busdrivers use available seatbelts while the vehicle is in motion. (Class II, Priority Action)(H-89-15)

Also, as a result of its investigation, the Safety Board issued Safety Recommendation H-89-16 to the United Bus Owners of America and the American Bus Association, H-89-17 to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, H-89-18 to the New Jersey Department of Transportation, and H-89-19 to the Federal Highway Administration.

The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent Federal agency with the statutory responsibility ". . . to promote transportation safety by conducting independent accident investigations and by formulating safety improvement recommendations" (Public Law 93-633). The Safety Board is vitally interested in any action taken as a result of its safety recommendations. Therefore, it would appreciate a response from you regarding action taken or contemplated with respect to the recommendation in this letter. Please refer to Safety Recommendation H-89-15 in your reply.

KOLSTAD, Acting Chairman, and BURNETT, LAUBER, NALL, and DICKINSON, Members, concurred in this recommendation.



By: James L. Kolstad
Acting Chairman